

Monthly Weather Report

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Summary of observations compiled from returns of official stations and voluntary observers

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May 1966 — *Changeable; a warm start and sunny ending*

Weather was mainly cyclonic in character throughout the month apart from the 1st, 15th and 16th when high pressure extended from the Azores, across England and Wales to southern Scandinavia, and on the 27th-30th when an anticyclone covered most of the British Isles.

The fine, very warm weather at the end of April continued during the first two days of May with afternoon temperatures over much of the country about 10°C above average, and with 13 hours of sunshine at many places on both days.

The warm south-easterly winds from the continent, previously associated with an anticyclone over Germany, gave place to westerlies on the 3rd as the anticyclone declined; after a mainly dry but cooler day rain from the Atlantic reached western districts during the night of the 3rd/4th. Falls were heavy at times on the 4th as fronts associated with a complex low pressure area to the west of the British Isles moved eastwards across the country. Winds veered to west and then to north-west on the 5th and 6th as small disturbances encroached over western districts, and weather became showery with frequent thunderstorms sometimes accompanied by hail. A slowly filling low pressure area, previously centred over North Wales, brought a period of more continuous rain to southern England as it finally moved across the country to the southern North Sea during the night of the 6th/7th.

The cool changeable weather continued in most districts for another five days. A ridge of high pressure moving eastwards across the country gave long sunny periods on the 7th, but rain associated with a deep depression approaching Ireland reached western districts during the evening with falls exceeding 1 inch locally in the south-west, and the rain, heavy at times, continued throughout the 8th as a complex depression moved south-east across the British Isles. Winds veered to the north-west and pressure rose considerably on the 9th, which together with the 10th, was fine and sunny, apart from some widely scattered showers, and occasional rain and local early morning fog patches in south-east England on the 9th. On the 11th a deepening depression moved northwards towards Iceland and an associated frontal trough brought widespread rain, with falls exceeding 1 inch in places, as it moved slowly eastwards across the country.

A spell of warmer weather followed with afternoon temperatures generally above the average for about four or five days. There were long sunny periods on the 12th-14th but these were broken by scattered showers on the 12th and a belt of rain moving eastwards from the Atlantic reached western districts during the afternoon of the 13th. On the 15th a ridge of high pressure from the Azores extended north-eastwards across the country to southern Scandinavia, giving rise to two fine warm days, each with 13-14 hours of sunshine and with afternoon temperatures rising to 23°C in places.

Weather remained fine in south-eastern districts for most of the 17th, but a belt of rain crossed the remainder of the British Isles during the course of the day, clearing the south-east on the morning of the 18th. This was the beginning of a little more than a week of rather cool, unsettled weather with westerly winds and periods of rain alternating with showers and sunny spells. Rain was widespread on the 19th, and a deep depression moving from the west of Scotland to southern Norway gave two particularly stormy days with widespread gales on the 22nd and 23rd. Further frontal systems gave considerable rain on the 24th and 25th as they crossed the country.

An anticyclone developed off western Ireland on the 26th, and later became centred over Britain giving generally dry and sunny weather during the remainder of the month. During the last three days sunshine was almost unbroken over the greater part of England and Wales, and temperature rose to about 5°C above average in many Midland and western districts.

Pressure and Wind — Mean pressure was below the 1931-60 average except in southern England and South Wales, the deviation ranging from -3.9mb at Benbecula to +2.5mb at Scilly. Surface winds, mainly southerly at first, became south-westerly on the 4th, were north-westerly

on the 7th-9th, south to south-west on the 10th-14th, light and variable on the 15th and 16th and then mainly westerly until the 25th, after which a general northerly airstream gave place (in southern England) to easterly winds during the last few days of the month. Gales were reported locally on the 4th-8th, 11th, 19th and 21st, and were widespread on the 22nd and 23rd. A gust of 86 kt was recorded at Lowther Hill on the 23rd and one of 75 kt at Bidston on the 22nd.

Temperature — A noteworthy feature of the month was its exceptionally warm start with afternoon temperatures reaching 27°C in some places. Temperature over much of the country was also above the average for three or four days around mid-month and also towards the end, yet mean temperature over the month as a whole differed little from the average.

Extremes included: (England and Wales) 27.2°C at Camden Square on the 2nd, -3.9°C at Moor House on the 10th and at Santon Downham on the 29th; (Scotland) 26.1°C at Stirling on the 31st, -4.2°C at Happendon Station on the 28th; (Northern Ireland) 23.9°C at Newry Abbey, Armagh and Lisnaskea on the 31st, 0.5°C at Loughermore Forest on the 18th and at Lislap Forest on the 7th and 18th.

Rainfall — In England and Wales rainfall was less than 50 per cent of the average locally in the Thames Estuary, and in the coastal region of the North Riding of Yorkshire and Denbighshire (North Wales). It was more than 150 per cent of the average in part of north-west England from Cumberland to Cheshire, in South Wales and locally in north Devon and in south-west Cornwall. In Scotland it was below average in parts of the south-east but more than twice the average locally in south-west Ross and Cromarty, the western part of Argyll and the Northern Isles.

Snow or sleet fell on a few of the higher peaks in Scotland on one or two days during the second half of the month.

Thunder was heard on five or six days, thunderstorms being fairly widespread over the eastern half of England on the 5th and 6th, and in east and south-east England on the 22nd.

Sunshine — Sunshine was below the average north and east of a line Elgin to Loch Long to Cape Wrath (in Scotland), elsewhere it was mainly above the average, percentages ranging from 140 at Nottingham to 92 at Hastings.

Fog — In Scotland morning fog was reported on only one or two occasions, mainly near the coast; it occurred in eastern England on the 9th, and in north-west England on the 21st.

Miscellaneous Phenomena — The aurora was visible in Scotland on 4 nights.

TABLE I—DISTRICT VALUES, MAY, 1966

DISTRICTS	AIR TEMPERATURE					EARTH TEMP.		RAIN DAYS	RAIN-FALL	SUNSHINE
	*Highest Max.	*Lowest Min.	Max.	Min.	Mean	Mean 1 ft.	Mean 4 ft.			
	Difference from Average					% of Average				
0 SCOTLAND, N.	22.2	0.0	-0.2	-0.7	-0.4	-	-	+3	152	96
1 SCOTLAND, E.	23.3	0.6	+0.5	-0.1	+0.1	-0.9	-0.7	0	93	114
2 ENGLAND, N.E.	25.0	0.0	+0.3	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	-0.2	0	107	115
3 ENGLAND, E.	26.1	1.7	0.0	+0.1	+0.1	+0.2	0.0	0	72	105
4 MIDLANDS	25.0	2.5	-0.3	0.0	-0.2	+0.7	+0.1	+1	115	129
5 ENGLAND, S.E.	26.1	1.0	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	+0.1	+0.4	0	99	107
6 SCOTLAND, W.	23.6	-3.5	-0.7	-0.6	-0.6	+0.3	-0.2	+3	128	107
7 ENGLAND, N.W. and N. Wales	23.9	-0.6	-0.5	+0.1	-0.1	+0.1	-0.2	+1	114	114
8 ENGLAND, S.W. and S. Wales	24.4	1.1	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2	+0.2	+0.2	+2	111	121
N. IRELAND	23.9	1.5	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2	-	-	+3	130	107
SCOTLAND	23.6	-3.5	-0.1	-0.5	-0.3	-	-	+2	131	106
ENG. and WALES	26.1	-0.6	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-	-	+1	109	115

*Highest Max. and Lowest Min. of the District Value Stations.